

Livingston County Master Plan Public Participation

December 1, 2015 Brown Bag Lunch

On Tuesday, December 1, 2015, County Planning held a Brown Bag Lunch on the subject of the Livingston County Master Plan; a plan which is currently being prepared by Livingston County Planning and the Livingston County Planning Commission. This Brown Bag Lunch Series is held on quarterly basis and the invite list primarily includes persons involved in local government such as Planning Commissioners, Trustees, Council Members, Elected Officials and Staff from each of the 20 local units of government and Livingston County government. The December 1 Brown Bag Lunch was the first public participation event for the new Livingston County Master Plan; approximately 36 persons were in attendance.

Master Plan Survey

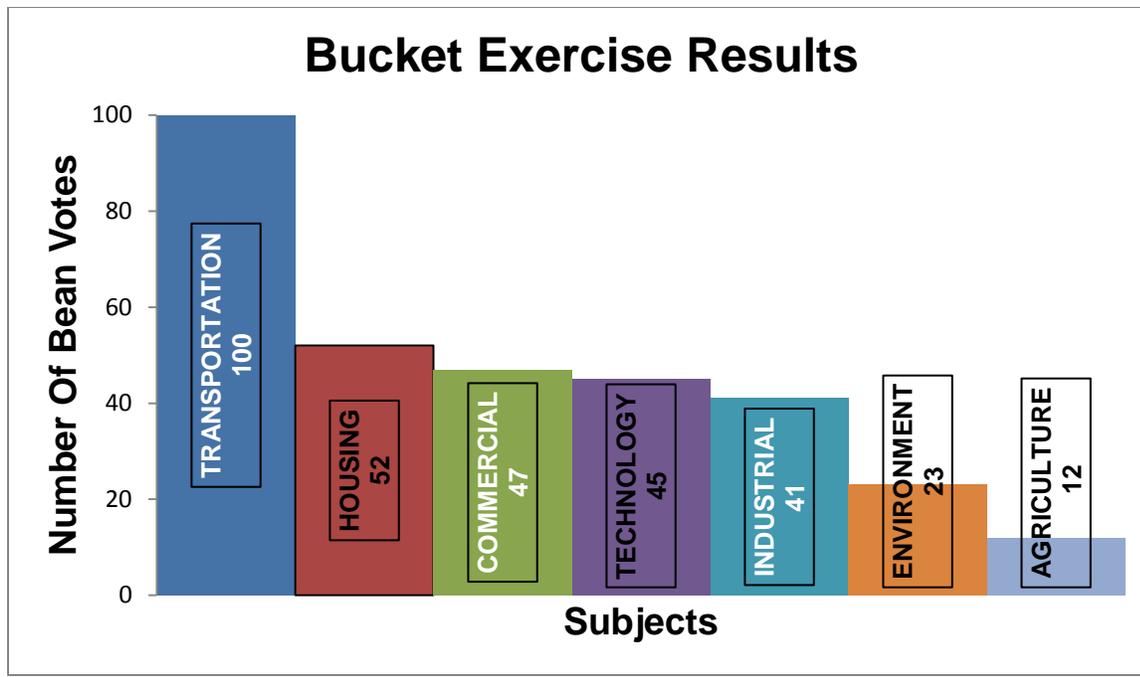
The Brown Bag Lunch event began with a 21 question master plan survey that regarded planning and zoning policy and practices. Each participant was given an electronic voting tablet to record their answer to each survey question. County Planning Staff showed a series of illustrated pictures that provided explanations for each of the items that participants would be voting on. Staff then asked the corresponding survey questions and allowed 10 seconds for each vote.

Bucket List Exercise

The second activity at the Brown Bag Lunch was a 'Bucket List Exercise.' Each subject section of the survey (e.g. Housing, Natural Environment, Transportation etc.) contained a question that asked the participant to prioritize their answer (e.g. what is most needed, what is most critical, etc.). The subject heading and the answer that received the majority of votes was written on one of 7 buckets. Each participant was then given 10 beans to 'vote' with, in order to prioritize these issues in terms of importance. For instance, if they thought the Housing issue was of utmost importance, they could place all 10 of their beans in the Housing bucket. They could also split their bean votes between a couple of buckets or all 7 buckets.

The results of the bucket exercise where as follows:

- Transportation – Mass Transportation, 100 votes
- Housing – Affordable Single-Family Housing, 52 votes
- Commercial – Sprawl Along Major Corridors, 47 votes
- Technology – Broadband and Traffic Management (Tie), 45 votes
- Industrial – Lack of Affordable Housing, 41 votes
- Environment – Preservation of Existing Features, 23 votes
- Agriculture – Development of Prime Agricultural Land, 12 votes



County Master Plan Tweets

The third activity at the Brown Bag Lunch was called ‘Tweets.’ It was an opportunity for participants to give short statements of information that they think County Planning and the County Planning Commission should consider when preparing the Livingston County Master Plan. Tweets were given out loud to the entire audience or they were written down on Tweet slips that were provided at each table. Each Tweet was short and concise like the 140 character limitation of Tweets on Twitter.

Written Tweets

- Existing infrastructure (roads, public utilities) are in many cases deteriorated and failing; future infrastructure development is reactive. Need more pro-active infrastructure planning.
- Preserve natural features.
- Affordable housing for low-income is not available, HUD can help but there is no housing for low income.
- Building affordable housing units in Livingston County would give employers in every industry the entry-level talent necessary to grow and succeed, making our county into a leader for the state.
- Industrial growth is being constrained due to labor shortages which may be resolved through mass transit and/or more local affordable housing options.
- Maybe check into LESA buses and drivers (their hours and runs may have been cut back) to allow them to help with picking up and dropping off handicap-wheelchair bound folks...with appointments to accommodate.
- Commercial/Industrial won’t develop without broadband capabilities.
- Agree with comment that we have enough subdivisions.

- Need affordable housing with transportation to jobs.
- We have any aging population – big need for senior housing in convenient locations etc.
- Although not a county-wide issue, the number of curb cuts in densely populated /congested roads present a safety and driving challenge.

Verbal Tweets

- Reconsider the definition of affordable housing (used in survey) – income levels exclude many county residents because the median household income is much higher than affordable housing thresholds.
- Look at all demographics, all ages, affordable housing affects our young people, our working industry people, as well as so many of our seniors. With our growing senior population we really need to be aware of this.
- Consider medical issues and rental housing costs.
- Affordable Housing and Sprawl – two difficult issues to address across the disparate municipalities.
- Public Transportation – our existing curb to curb system needs to be expanded to be effective throughout the county; more buses are needed on the road during the periods of 8-10 a.m. and 3-5 p.m.; we need better connections to other communities, we have none right now and this could be accomplished in a variety of ways. We must not forget that we have two railroads running through the County, one north/south and the other east/west that should both be considered.
- We need more planning of public parks and recreation areas, particularly on the community level. There is lots of acreage undeveloped, open space, state lands, Metropark lands, but at the community level, community parks are something that the community should be focusing on.
- People live in Livingston County because of the quality of life and the quality of natural resources, so we should be maintaining our existing natural infrastructure.
- Our County could use a transit authority, surrounding counties all have transit authorities and we need to step up!
- It's hard to visit a friend out of the county in the hospital when you do not drive. LETS will not take you out of the county to visit a friend, they will only take you out of county for medical appointments. It's hard on people who do not drive. There are lots of people with disabilities in Livingston County that we must think of.
- We need a more well-connected community, we need a better Mass Transportation Plan and we need more funding to do that.
- Taking the concept of a well-connected community, think of it in broad terms of traffic, roads, transportation, as well as broadband, and how we keep the communities connected - trails, different forms of government communication, all of that, the big concept of connectivity.
- We have enough subdivisions.
- Everyone needs to be aware of people in wheelchairs and if they would like to go somewhere and LETS is not available, a lot of areas do not have sidewalks and that is a big issue.

- Affordable, accessible housing as well as senior housing is needed; it is important for people to be able to get in and out of the house, so more one-story senior housing with no steps may be needed, as well as sidewalks.
- For persons on the HUD low income limits in Livingston County, homeownership may never be a reality so I would like to see affordable housing encompass rental units.
- We need to utilize our existing infrastructure more, particularly for community development in terms of using what we already have. In terms of transportation we need to utilize the two railroad tracks that go through this community because they are an asset.
- If there is an accident on US-23 where the highway is completely blocked, how do we keep transportation moving, this is an advantage of rail.
- The Industrial sector is growing at a tremendous rate or is prime to grow at a remarkable rate, but it is being held back by lack of options for new industries to be located here, as far as industrial spaces and vacancies. Most importantly right now is the labor issue, and this all ties back to affordable housing or until affordable housing can be built, the transit issues for industrial employment.
- I would like planning that preserves our farms and agriculture, I think that if we lose that and the open space character of the county, we lose everything!
- So much work has been done in the county with Advantage Livingston and placemaking, we really need to refer back to this and how this aligns with our county plan, there was a lot of work, a lot of great input, and a lot of golden nuggets there.